

## **FISCAL NOTE**

### **HB 578 - SB 845**

March 17, 2005

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Requires the State Board of Education to promulgate by July 1, 2006, standards for textbook weight for students at the elementary, middle, and high school grade levels, giving considerations to health and safety risks to students.

#### **ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**Other Fiscal Impact - The fiscal impact will depend on the standards developed. Estimate assumes some textbooks will have to be divided into multiple volumes at the time of reprinting resulting in an increase in state and local government expenditures. The amount of increased expenditures cannot be determined but is estimated to exceed \$4,000,000 to the state and \$1,000,000 to local governments, which assumes that a minimum of 10% of the textbooks would have to be divided into multiple volumes at an increase in cost of 20%.**

#### Assumptions:

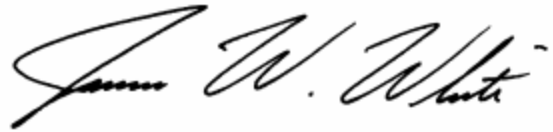
- Local school systems currently spend approximately \$53,400,000 per year for textbooks. If one-half of these books were divided into multiple volumes in order to meet the new guidelines, at an increase in cost of 20%, the additional cost for textbooks is estimated to be \$5,340,000.
- As current textbooks are renewed and new textbooks are approved and purchased in the normal course of business, weight standards will be used as criteria to determine, on a textbook by textbook basis, which textbooks meet the weight standards and are eligible for purchase.
- Any costs to the State Board of Education to review and develop a policy on weight standards for textbooks is estimated to be not significant and can be handled within existing resources.
- Even though each approved textbook may come within the required weight standard set out by the State Board of Education, the weight of the individual books needed for class each day may collectively still be considered excessive.
- Limiting the weight of a student's load to a fixed percentage of his/her body weight would result in some students only being able to carry a limited number of books at one time.
- Students carry a number of items other than textbooks, which contributes to the weight of backpacks.

- To the extent certain textbooks that are required for use in specific courses do not meet the weight standards and two or more volumes must be purchased rather than one volume, or more expensive textbooks must be purchased because existing textbooks do meet the weight standard, local government expenditures are expected to increase.

*\*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

**CERTIFICATION:**

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James W. White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" written in a smaller, more compact script than the last name "White".

James W. White, Executive Director